

Today's News - Tuesday, October 6, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is a no-newsletter day - we'll be back Thursday, October 8 (and a heads-up: we won't be posting Friday, either). Now, on to a particularly juicy, somewhat contentious news day!

- We were hesitant to lead with this today, but Bayley's rather over-the-top tirade about "why architecture would be better off without" Hadid and her "lack of charm and ocean-going bitterness" is simply astounding ("indignant termagant" - a touch of misogyny thrown in for good measure?).
- Wainwright wades into why the "flawed fairytale" and "sylvan fantasy" of Heatherwick's Garden Bridge is "beginning to unravel."
- Hurst digs into the leaked details of the internal investigation into the Garden Bridge procurement process, and why it's being "slammed as a 'whitewash'" ("nailing jelly to a wall" included).
- Vancouver's former senior architect/development planner weighs in on H&deM's Vancouver Art Gallery design: "The emperor has no clothes - in its present form it will be an embarrassment to Vancouver. Frankly, this design is underwhelming."
- Capps ponders the sad state of American stadium design: "cities are going to keep financing these boondoggles no matter what," so why can't they at least be beautiful? (like H&deM's stadium in Bordeaux).
- Turnbull wonders: "Why isn't the profession seeing refugee camps as architectural projects? Is it a problem with how the profession is trained? Or have architects voluntarily abdicated responsibility for one of their profession's foundational obligations?"
- Olcayto calls on architects to help AJ "fill the ethics void" and "help define a set of ethics that can reasonably be applied to contemporary architectural practice."
- Betsky takes in the "sprawling" Chicago Architecture Biennial and finds "a plethora of 1960s utopian thinking and style. We do seem to be having a particular postmodern moment here."
- Chen, the original curator of the Beijing Design Week, weighs in on its history, intent, and current iteration: "It's a sprawling, lively mix - sometimes overwhelming, often imperfect, but faithful to the original intention."
- "Mutual respect is a crucial factor" in how "82 mayors came to align on a common vision" for Montréal's 82 municipalities "to think and act as one."
- Hough hails Chicago's 606 and its "rugged elegance and stripped-down, confident restraint" - it's "more like a landscape version of a neighborhood pub" (it's not the High Line - and that's a good thing).
- Three teams of young Australian design talent are shortlisted in the competition to redesign Sydney's George Street: they "grasped the challenge of ingraining human identity within an urban landscape."
- Eyefuls of Levet's MPavilion in Melbourne, a "forest canopy" made of materials used to build surfboards and camera tripods (and it glows in the dark!).
- Plan to spend some time watching the AIA's Look Up Film Challenge winners (all short, and well worth watching!).
- Two young architects offer a sneak-peek at "Within Formal Cities," an upcoming documentary that focuses on informal settlements and "design's role in addressing the global housing crisis."
- Call for entries: eVolo 2016 Skyscraper Competition + 1st Annual BOLD Awards for Building Optimizers, Leaders, and Disruptors who are advancing green building practices + ULI Hines Student Competition.

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Zaha Hadid's aggressive performance on Today confirms why architecture would be better off without her: ...she put in a bravura performance as an indignant termagant, bringing an interview...to a conclusion that was acridly bitter...intractable views, aggressive demeanour, lack of charm and ocean-going bitterness...Hadid has, alas, confirmed many popular prejudices about architecture and architects. She may also have, damagingly, confirmed prejudices about what happens when a woman is scorned. By Stephen Bayley- The Spectator (UK)

London's garden bridge: the end of the road? It has seemed impervious to criticism up to now, but is the flawed fairytale plan to build a forest across the Thames finally beginning to wither? The idea for the planted fairytale crossing...has long managed to alienate champions of both gardens and bridges alike...the sylvan fantasy beginning to unravel. By Oliver Wainwright -- Thomas Heatherwick- Guardian (UK)

TfL's Garden Bridge probe slammed as a 'whitewash': Critics...seize on earlier more critical version of mayoral body's internal procurement review leaked to the AJ..."it appears to be yet another stage in a process of backwards-engineering"... By Will Hurst -- Heatherwick Studio- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Another voice on Vancouver Art Gallery design: The Emperor Has No Clothes: Ralph Segal, former senior architect/development planner, City of Vancouver: Thank goodness the presentation of the proposal pointedly cites it as "conceptual", for if this design is implemented in its present form it will be an embarrassment to Vancouver...Frankly, this design is underwhelming. -- Herzog & de Meuron- Vancouver Sun

Why Can't American Stadiums Be Beautiful? Americans should build fewer ballparks and arenas. But if we're going to keep building no matter what, we should put some effort into them...The return on the investment doesn't come close to justifying these public expenditures...cities are going to keep financing these boondoggles no matter what...So why don't any of them look like the Nouveau Stade de Bordeaux? By Kriston Capps -- Herzog & de Meuron; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; Populous - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Why isn't the profession seeing refugee camps as architectural projects? Is it a problem with how the profession is trained? Is the design of temporary settlements off the table and out of sight as a challenging, interesting and worthwhile venture? Has the activity of International Agencies, NGOs, Foundations and Trusts produced a set of codes and conventions that eliminate architectural design as contributory factor...Or have architects voluntarily abdicated responsibility for one of their profession's foundational obligations... By David Turnbull/PITCHAfrica / Waterbanks - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Help us fill the ethics void: What are the moral duties of the architect in today's chaotic, globalised marketplace? It's all a bit confusing. Why are we courting a government that stifled calls for democracy in Hong Kong...And why is Zaha Hadid targeted for daring to work in Qatar? ...there is a growing sense that the time has come to take a more principled stance. The AJ wants to work with you to fill this void. We want to help define a set of ethics that can reasonably be applied to contemporary architectural practice. The question is: are you up for it? By Rory Olcayto- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Doodling in the Grid: Aaron Betsky finds a chorus of ad-hoc proposals in the sprawling Chicago Architecture Biennial: ...a plethora of 1960s utopian thinking and style. We do seem to be having a particular postmodern moment here, one that focuses on the intersection of melting classicism and space age faith in technology..."Make no big plans," the exhibition seemed to whisper from the corners of its Beaux-Arts prison, "Just subvert the order." [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Beijing Design Week: City of 22 million embraces chaos: ...became an experiment in turning the government's top-down support...into a bottom-up platform for the designers, makers, curators, companies and others who, we believed, should be put front and center, and in deeper engagement with a broader public...It's a sprawling, lively mix - sometimes overwhelming, often imperfect, but faithful to the original intention. By Aric Chen/M+ -- Beatrice Leanza [images]- CNN

In the Montréal area, 82 municipalities begin to think and act as one: Local leaders increasingly talk of 'Greater Montréal' - and

mean it: ...how the 82 mayors came to align on a common vision...mutual respect is a crucial factor. - Citiscope.org

Substance, Style, and the Success of the 606: ...straightforward design of the 606's centerpiece, the Bloomingdale Trail, provides an exhilarating breath of fresh air into an urban realm in need of a few good surprises...a sort of rugged elegance...stripped-down, confident restraint...a bustling multi-modal paradise, packed with what seemed to be almost exclusively locals. In this sense, it is a lot more like a landscape version of a neighborhood pub than some glitzy new nightspot (see the Riverwalk). By Mark Hough -- Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates [images]- PLANetizen

Three concepts shortlisted in competition to redesign Sydney's George Street: The crop of Australia's young design talent have put their creative minds together to reimagine Sydney's busiest street as a reactivated public place for people and leisure...projects grasped the challenge of ingraining human identity within an urban landscape. -- Christian Vitulli; Nicola Balch/McGregor Coxall & Albert Quizon/CHROFI; Krystal Pua/Tropman and Tropman [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Amanda Levete Architects' MPavilion now open: ..."forest canopy"...features 43 translucent petals...made out of ultra-thin translucent resin developed by a Queensland surfboard manufacturer and reinforced carbon fibre strands developed by a Finnish manufacturer of camera tripods. At night the petals...glow in a halo-like effect... -- AL_A [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Look Up Film Challenge Winners Announced: Highlights Impact Architects Have on Communities: San Diego duo claim first prize with meditation on personal identity and urbanism; "My City Listens"; "The RED Office"; "Mixed Plate Hawaii"; etc. [link to videos]- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

New Documentary on Design and Informal Settlements: "Within Formal Cities" by intern architects Brian Gaudio and Abe Drechsler highlights stories from these informal settlements in South America and focuses on design's role in addressing the global housing crisis. [link to trailer]- Impact Design Hub (formerly PublicInterestDesign.org)

Call for entries: eVolo 2016 Skyscraper Competition (international); cash prizes; earlybird registration deadline (save money!): November 17 (submissions due January 26, 2016)- eVolo Magazine

Call for entries: Call for nominations: 1st Annual BOLD Awards: Celebrating Building Optimizers, Leaders, and Disruptors who are advancing green building practices; deadline: October 28- BOLD Awards

Call for entries: ULI Hines Student Competition (open to graduate students from accredited educational institutions in the U.S. and Canada); no fee; (big!) cash prizes; deadline: December 7- Urban Land Institute (ULI)

Frank Gehry's Urban Renewal: Throughout "Frank Gehry" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the repeated and insistent message is that his work "distinguished him as an urbanist," as if trying so hard to convince us that it's true. The curator doth protest too much. By Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA/LA [images]- ArchNewsNow.com



Gehry Partners, LLP: A Gehry building begins with a sketch..."As soon as I understand the scale of the building and the relationship to the site and the relationship to the client, as it becomes more and more clear to me, I start doing sketches." By Kirsten Kiser

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